DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 507 CS 508 155

AUTHOR Crawford, C. B.; Nuss, Mark D.
TITLE Performance Evaluation Interviews: A Method to Bring Forensic Coaches' and Students' Expectations Together.
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Kansas Speech Communication Association (54th, Great Bend, KS, April 1993).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Debate; *Evaluation Criteria; Higher Education; Performance; Speech Communication; *Student Evaluation; Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Debate Coaches

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the performance evaluation, a tool extensively treated in the scholarly literature that allows managers and employees to gain shared understanding about workplace behavior. The paper maintains that in the forensic community, the performance evaluation interview can also be an effective forum in which coaches can give constructive feedback to student competitors. The paper's first section focuses on the importance of performance evaluation interviews. The second section deals with purposes of performance evaluation interviews, while the third section discusses preparing for effective performance evaluation interviews. The fourth section sets out an effective performance evaluation interview procedure, and the fifth section discusses potential problems. A performance evaluation sheet is appended. (SR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED356507

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION INTERVIEWS: A METHOD TO BRING FORENSIC COACHES' AND STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS TOGETHER

C. B. Crawford
Mark D. Nuss

Fort Hays State University
600 Park Street
Hays, KS 67601

A Paper Presented at the 54th Kansas Speech Communication Association Convention
Great Bend, Kansas

In the scholarly literature the performance evaluation has had extensive treatment as a tool that allows managers and employees to gain shared understanding about workplace behavior. This paper sought to explain the importance of holding performance evaluations and the purposes behind the performance interview. In addition, literature concerning the most effective procedure was discussed. Finally, some potential problems to avoid during the performance evaluation interview were examined.

CS 508 155

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. B. Crawford

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION INTERVIEWS: A METHOD TO BRING FORENSIC COACHES' AND STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS TOGETHER

One of the essential elements of the coach-competitor relationship is the feedback that must be given to students. Much has been written on the attitudes of coaches toward feedback, but the practice of constructive feedback is a rare talent that few coaches master. In the forensic community, the ability to give constructive feedback can be the difference between retaining a student's interest and participation in forensics or loosing them. Baron (1988) and Larson (1986) both note that people are reluctant to communicate negative feedback. But, as forensic educators, a coaches responsibility must be to improve students as competitors as well as individuals. As a result, coaches must improve their ability to give constructive feedback. Initially, this paper will focus on the importance of the performance evaluation interview. Further, the purposes and procedure of the performance evaluation interview will be discussed. Finally, the paper will discuss potential problems to be avoided in the effective performance evaluation interview.

Importance of Performance Evaluation Interviews

Literature in the management field stresses the importance of the performance evaluation interview. Larson (1984) suggests that "feedback about the performance of individuals and groups in organizations is an integral component of any organizational control system" (p. 42). Prior study of the performance appraisal has shown that satisfaction is linked to the interview procedure (Pooyan & Eberhardt, 1989). The importance of the

performance evaluation interview is well documented and proves compelling.

For the forensics competitors, evaluation is an essential part of the overall performance. Preliminary assessment of the student is given by the coach. This assessment, done to facilitate team competition, is based on noncompetition data. Further, students are assessed by judges, receiving feedback in the form of ballot criticism. Informally, students receive feedback from other competitors. At this point it is important to recognize that evaluation means more than the debate and forensic competition. Evaluation should include planned constructive feedback from the coach based on holistic performance characteristics such as motivation, dedication, personal hygiene, ethics, personal conduct, and effort. Performance evaluation interviews are valuable because coaches are able to discuss with students this holistic performance.

Purposes of Performance Evaluation Interviews

Regarding management, much has been written on the varied purposes behind the performance evaluation interview. Baker and Morgan (1984) indicated that every performance interview should function to evaluate and discuss administrative decisions and performance. In addition, the performance interview should be to counsel and develop the employee through coaching. Dorfman, Stephan, and Loveland (1986) suggested performance appraisal systems serve two functions. First, performance evaluations served administrative purposes for determining salary,

promotions, etc. Second, performance appraisals served to develop the employee through feedback and counseling. Keaveny, Inderrieden, and Allen (1987) discussed three major characteristics of the performance appraisal process: problem-solving, employees participation, and mutual goal setting.

The performance evaluation interview for students should center on the role that they play in relation to the broader organization. Initially, the evaluation should focus on the current holistic performance of the student. The discussion should then include future roles for the student. Students benefit from increased understanding of the their current role on the squad. In a recent survey of the FHSU squad, there was a significant difference in understanding roles between those students having performance evaluations and those students not having a performance evaluation ($t = 2.78$, $p < .05$).

Students benefited from interaction about their future role on the squad. Understanding the link between present and future competition can facilitate personal growth. Even if the role was limited, students had decreased ambiguity when constructive feedback and good rationale were given. Growth occured when students recognize the link between future success and past constructive feedback.

With the relevance and purposes of the performance evaluation interview established, a thorough examination of this topic would not be complete without including specific aspects of the performance evaluation.

Preparing for Effective Performance Evaluation Interviews

Perhaps the most important aspect in preparing for the performance appraisal was the climate that the coach created. Several authors (Baker & Morgan, 1984; Krein, 1990; Malinauskas & Clement, 1987; Wexley & Snell, 1987) suggested that climate is a basic element of any performance evaluation. The climate should be open, participative conducive to honest, trusting interaction.

Other findings offer more specific recommendations to prepare for the interview. Baker and Morgan (1984) suggested that four steps should be taken before the actual performance evaluation interview:

1. Schedule the performance appraisal in advance and be prepared.
2. Create the proper atmosphere for two-way communication.
3. Begin with a statement of purpose.
4. Encourage the employee to participate.

Further, Malinauskas and Clement (1987) explained the preview section of the appraisal process. Here the manager discusses the organizations policy on performance appraisals, talks about performance criteria, allows self-assessment, and sets the time, place, and agenda for the performance interview. The overriding task is to set the climate for the discussion. This relies on both parties to commit to the importance of the interview, and requires participation and planning from the interviewer and interviewee.

The climate that is created prior to the interview can serve to facilitate interaction throughout the interview. Open and participative coaches will find that the interview will move into

a productive interaction more readily. Forcing or powering a response from students in a evaluation setting leads to more apprehension (Larson, 1986). If negative feedback is used, an open, participative, high-trust environment is unquestionably superior to a nonparticipative climate. Interestingly, Goodall, Wilson, and Waagen (1986) noted that the performance appraisal interview is a great context to breed not only improved performance, but to increase fear. In sum, encouraging a participative climate and engaging in a few simple administrative details will allow the interview to go off much better than otherwise.

Effective Performance Evaluation Interview Procedure

During the actual interview process, several considerations must be observed. Keaveny et al. (1987) results showed the importance of establishing goals, giving feedback, and permitting participation. Baker and Morgan (1984) suggested that effective interviews must discuss total (holistic) performance. Also, the performance evaluation should be documented. An examination of holistic performance should include the following:

1. The coach and student discuss mutually recognized strengths.
2. The coach discusses student performance strengths which are not recognized by the student.
3. The coach and student review areas of satisfactory performance.
4. The coach discusses student's satisfactory performance not recognized by the student.

5. The coach and student review areas for growth and improvement in performance.
6. The coach discusses areas for possible growth and improvement which are not recognized by the student.

Each of these steps is symbolic to the student by showing concern for details and looking at the total picture from both a coach's and student's perspective.

A coach's use of power has a major influence on the perception of the student. Wexley and Snell (1987) found that positive power (expert, referent, and reward) were significantly correlated to participation, goal setting, career development, accuracy of feedback, and motivation to improve. Coercive power was significantly negatively correlated to participation, accuracy of feedback, and motivation to improve. Legitimate power was positively correlated to accuracy of feedback, motivation to improve, and attempts to improve. The findings suggested that subordinates react more favorably to positive power than to coercive power.

Malinauskas and Clement (1987) suggested that the interview section is held to primarily exchange ideas. The interviewer must be competent in communication skills for the interview to be successful. Verbal skills should be centered around creating a positive and supportive atmosphere. Listening skills that should be emphasized include paraphrasing, effective questioning, and affect monitoring. Finally, the coach should examine body language, paralanguage, and spatial language of the student. In addition, coaches should look for and exhibit consistency between

In short, the interview should focus on a students growth, not punishment or ego deflation. The responsibility of an effective interview primarily falls on the shoulders of the coach. Climate is set from the moment the student is asked into the conference. The interview has the potential to be a tense situation for coach and student. Documentation, thought and planning should go into the specific agenda of the interview to decrease tension and facilitate an open climate.

Potential Problems

Baron (1988), Goodall et al. (1986), and Larson (1986) suggested that criticism of the student can be potentially troublesome. Baron (1988) noted that destructive criticism tends to produce negative feelings especially when given by the subordinate. Destructive criticism impacts self-set goals and feelings of self-efficacy. Baron (1988) further noted that this can impact the performance of the subordinate. Furthermore, Baron (1988) and Larson (1986) found that people are reluctant to communicate negative feedback. It follows that coaches should focus their attention on empathic constructive criticism, rather than destructive criticism. Even if the interviewer does not perceive the criticism to be unduly harsh, one still has the responsibility to maintain positive self-regard of the student.

Problems compound when destructive criticism is leveled against a student without documented behaviors. The evaluation should focus on observed specific performance and probable outcomes, rather than speculation or hearsay. In practice, this

problem can be avoided by using a performance evaluation or critical incident log (Appendix A). Documentation helps reduce defensiveness in the performance evaluation interview. As always, effective communication skills, verbal and nonverbal, are extremely important to mediate the potentially destructive nature of criticism.

Larson (1985) suggested that many cognitive elements can get in the way of effective performance interviewing. Memory is considered to be very important, but only a small portion of the behavior occurring in the performance evaluation is actually stored by the rater. In addition, bias can influence the rater at the storage and retrieval stages. The use of documentation allows a coach to rely less on memory and more on written notes.

Inappropriate communication, verbal or nonverbal, during the interview process can hinder the exchange between coach and student. Krein (1990) and Malinauskas and Clement (1987) indicated that communication skills are very important elements. Coaches must constantly be aware of their communication skills. This potential problem can be partially alleviated when we empathize and try to understand the students situation. Furthermore, coaches and students must take responsibility for their messages.

Parting Comments

We have found the performance evaluation to be beneficial for the best and for the worst of competitors. Students don't always receive the feedback they need or deserve. The

performance evaluation interview has been an effective forum for the discussion of student behavior. Conducting the performance appraisal in a documented, empathic manner will help insure students grow from the event.

REFERENCES

Baker, H.K., & Morgan, P.I. (1984). Two goals in every performance appraisal. Personnel Journal, 63 (9), 74-78.

Baron, R.A. (1988). Negative effects of destructive criticism: impact on conflict, self-efficacy, and task performance. Journal of Applied Psychology, 73 (2), 199-207.

Dorfman, P.W., Stephan, W.G., & Loveland, J. (1986). Performance appraisal behaviors: Supervisor perceptions and subordinate reactions. Personnel Psychology, 39 (3), 579-597.

Goodall, H.L., Wilson, G.L., & Waagen, C.L. (1986). The performance appraisal interview: An interpretive reassessment. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 72 (1), 74-87.

Keaveny, T.J., Inderrieden, E.J., & Allen, R.E. (1987). An integrated perspective of performance appraisal interviews. Psychological Reports, 61, 639-646.

Krein, T.J. (1990, May). Performance reviews that rate an "A". Personnel, 67, 38-40.

Larson, J.R. (1986). Supervisors' performance feedback to subordinates: The impact of subordinate performance valence and outcome dependence. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 37, 391-408.

Larson, J.R. (1985). Role of memory in the performance-evaluation process: With special reference to diary-keeping. Psychological Reports, 57, 775-782.

Malinauskas, B.K. & Clement, R.W. (1987). Performance appraisal interviewing for tangible results. Training and Development Journal, 41 (2), 74-79.

Pooyan, A. & Eberhardt, B.J. (1989). Correlates of performance appraisal satisfaction among supervisory and nonsupervisory employees. Journal of Business Research, 19 (3), 215-226.

Wexley, K.N. & Snell, S.A. (1987). Managerial power: A neglected aspect of the performance appraisal interview. Journal of Business Research, 15 (1), 45-54.

Appendix A

TALKING TIGERS - FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SHEET

Person Evaluated_____

Evaluator_____ Date_____

Job Description Information

General responsibilities - expectations_____

_____

_____

_____

Specific responsibilities - expectations (as negotiated)_____

_____

_____

_____

Critical Event Log

Date	Event - Activity	Action Taken/Warranted - Overall Performance - Comments

Page_____

Date	Event - Activity	Action Taken/Warranted - Overall Performance - Comments